



Oldonyiro Livestock Market in Lekurruki Community Conservancy located in Isiolo County in northern Kenya. Photo/USAID

KENYA

RESILIENT COMMUNITY CONSERVANCIES PROGRAM

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is a local membership organization of community conservancies in northern and coastal Kenya that builds peace and improves livelihoods through conservation. Formed in 2004 by the Lewa Conservancy with support from USAID, NRT brings together local pastoralist landowners and the Government of Kenya to promote the long-term conservation of wildlife in Kenya's northern rangelands and coastal region. At present, NRT oversees 39 community-owned and managed conservancies covering nearly 42,000 square kilometers. NRT works with 11 County Governments, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), private investors and other partners to improve the lives and livelihoods of more than 620,000 residents from 18 different ethnic groups in some of Kenya's major wildlife migration corridors. The Resilient Community Conservancies Program (RCCP) is a six-year program designed to scale up support to NRT's existing community conservancies in northern and coastal Kenya and strategically support new conservancies.

OUR WORK

The project enhances biodiversity conservation within locally managed lands that are outside Kenya's nationally protected areas. Additionally, RCCP expands economic opportunities for conservancy communities anchored in biodiversity, creates lasting peace by reducing conflicts over natural resources, reduces wildlife trafficking across conservancies, and enhances the local communities' ability to withstand climate variability and shocks.

ACTIVITY AREAS

Governance and Peace: The project works to strengthen conservancy institutions and develop high standards of governance within community conservancies. It builds peace and advances indigenous approaches to averting resource-based conflicts. A key activity under this project is the development of a participatory Conservancy Management and Community Development Plan. This plan articulates a long-term development vision for conservation and development in the area and serves as an investment plan for the conservancies and the private sector.

Resilient Livelihoods: The RCCP supports conservancies to improve the ability of their communities to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses, and to improve the ability of rangeland ecosystems to resist and recover from drought and long-term climate stress. The RCCP extends NRT's Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, which allows conservancy members to apply for funding for their resilience projects. Examples of funded projects include sand dam construction, developing eco-tourism sites, and savings and loans programs.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Security: Together with Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and the Kenya Police, USAID supports NRT's community monitoring program to address the threats from poachers and cattle-rustlers. The program equips conservancy rangers with the skills to perform wildlife surveillance and security monitoring. In turn, this information provides credible data on poaching that feeds into national and international databases such as the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

Ecosystems: Reversing ecosystem degradation and building productive and resilient rangelands through more effective planning, management and monitoring of natural resources is a key component of the program's resilience and biodiversity conservation strategy. To date, over two million hectares are under rangeland restoration and management.

Wildlife: Community conservancies provide considerable gains to wildlife conservation through improved security and increased community awareness of the value and potential benefits of wildlife. The program supports the establishment of community conservancies in critical wildlife dispersal areas and the rehabilitation of rangelands. These conservancies serve as a vital refuge for wildlife and are significant assets for tourism investments for the communities.

Enterprise: The program works with local leaders to develop new economic opportunities. It adds value to the livestock market chain with an average \$1 million to \$1.5 million annual revenue generated, empowers over 1,000 women through beadwork enterprises, diversifies tourism opportunities which produce an average \$1.4 million income annually, and generates market-based conservation financing options for conservancies.

BUDGET: \$23.9 million

DURATION

September 2015 –2021

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Laikipia, Lamu, Marsabit, Meru, Tana River, Samburu, Marsabit and West Pokot counties

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

The Northern Rangelands Trust

KEY PARTNERS

County Governments, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Police, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Rural Focus and Centre for Humanitarian Change, Grevy's Zebra Trust, Samburu Girls Foundation

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